

# Vision & Mission in Buddhism

Vision in Buddhism refers to the ultimate goal of emancipation. This is often described as the attainment of enlightenment or awakening, which involves the complete eradication of craving (*Rāgakkhaya*), hatred (*Dosakkhaya*), and delusion (*Mohakkhaya*), and the realization of the true nature of reality (*Saccānupativedha*). This vision is based on the Five Aggregates (*Pañcakkhandha*), the Dependent Origination (*Patīccasamuppāda*) and the Four Noble Truths (*Cattāri Ariyasaccāni*), which state that suffering exists, suffering arises from craving and attachment, suffering can be overcome, and there is a path to the cessation. The path, which is the mission, is explained as the Noble Eightfold Path. Sometimes, it has been explained variously according to persons.

On the path of liberation, vision and mission both are very important. **Vision without mission is useless. And, mission without vision is blind.** Practicing something is without knowing the path is like going somewhere without knowing the destination or address.

Hence the Blessed one always emphasizes the importance of having understanding of the path before we start our spiritual journey as;

“*Sammādiṭṭhi pure jvaṃ*” - Right understanding is first.

“*Jānato ahaṃ bhikkhave āsavānam khayaṃ vadāmi no ajānato no apassato*”. I proclaim the liberation for those who know the path who see the path.

“*Yo Dhammaṃ passata, So maṃ passata*” – He who sees the Dhamma sees me.

“*Yo Patīccasamuppādaṃ passati, So dhammaṃ passati*” – He who sees the dependent origination sees the Dhamma.

In the very first sermon, the Buddha explained, his vision in short with some synonyms.

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| <i>Cakkhuṃ udāpadi</i> | - Eye is arose.       |
| <i>Ñāṇaṃ udapādi</i>   | - Knowledge is arose. |
| <i>Paññā udapādi</i>   | - Wisdom is arose.    |
| <i>Vijjā udapādi</i>   | - Science is arose.   |
| <i>Āloko udapādi</i>   | - Light is arose.     |

Meanwhile, the Buddha explains this vision in various ways as; “*Samma ditti*” = Right understanding, “*Ditti Sampatti*” = Accomplishment of view, “*Udayabbhaya gamini paññā*” - Knowledge of arising and ceasing., “*Suta Dhanaṃ*” - The wealth of hearing, “*Sutamaya Nāna*” - The knowledge of hearing etc.

There are two causes of having vision or right understanding (*Sammādiṭṭhi*). They are;

1. Listening to Dhamma (*Paratoghosa*)
2. Wise Consideration (*Yoniso Manasikāra*)

The nearest reason of having dhamma understanding is that association of good friendship. We receive good association who gives us dhamma as the result of previous good karma.

Having the correct vision on the path of liberation, good friendship plays a very big role. That's why the Buddha "*Sakalamevahidaṃ brahmacariyaṃ yadidaṃ, kalyānamittatā, kalyānasahāyatā, kalyānasampavaṃkata*" – the entire Buddha

Accordingly, good association includes three things. They are;

1. Having good association – *Kalyānamittatā*,
2. Making them friendly – *Kalyānasahāyatā*,
3. Paying attention to what they say – *Kalyānasampavaṃkatā*.

Sammadiṭṭhi or right vision is divided into two according to Mahacattarisaka Sautta (MN 41).

### 1. Mundane (ලෝකික) right vision; the view of kamma and its results

(a). With the divine eye, the Buddha saw beings passing away and being reborn, inferior and superior, beautiful and ugly, fortunate and unfortunate, and He understood how beings migrate according to their kamma formation thus; "these beings who engaged in misconduct by body, speech and mind.... After death, have been reborn in a bad destination, in the lower world, in hell; but these beings who engaged in good conduct by body, speech and mind .... After death, have been reborn in a good destination, in a heavenly world" (MN 4, MN 36 etc.)

(b). "A woman or man, a householder or one gone forth, should often reflect thus; "I am the owner of my kamma, the heir of my kamma; I have kamma as my origin, kamma as my relative, kamma as my resort; I will be the heir of whatever kamma, good or bad, that I do." (AN 5:57)

A brief summary of kamma;

- (a). The meaning of kamma; "It is volition (cetanā) that I call kamma"
- (b). The tree doors of kamma; body, speech and mind.
- (c). The ethical distinctions of kamma; wholesome and unwholesome.
- (d). What determines kamma as good or bad – the 'root' of kamma

Greed, hatred and delusion vs. generosity, loving kindness and wisdom.

Practical implications of the kamma teaching.

- (a). Understanding our present situation and present capacities
- (b). Freedom of self-transformation
- (c). Kamma and the way to liberation

With the understanding of kamma, someone can practice the noble eightfold path up to Jhana, samatha reducing five hindrances.

### 2. World – transcending (ලෝකාන්ත) right view; understanding the four noble truths

With the understanding of the four noble truths, someone can practice three disciplines as; Sila, Samadhi, Panna. And, he is able to eradicate all the defilements with ignorance completely.

According to Sammadit̥hi Sutta (MN1), they are 16 ways how to develop right vision. Using any of them we are able to develop our vision and practice the path for ever lasting happiness. Those ways are;

1. The Wholesome and the Unwholesome (*kusala & Ausala*) = කුසල - අකුසල
2. Nutriment (*Āhāra*) = ආහාර
3. The Four Noble Truths (*Sacca*) = සච්ච
4. Aging and Death (*Jarā - Maraṇa*) = ජරා - මරණ
5. Birth (*Jāti*) = ජාති
6. The process of Becoming (*Bhava*) = භව
7. Clinging (*Upādāna*) = උපාදන
8. Craving (*Taṇhā*) = තණ්හා
9. Feeling (*Vedanā*) = වේදනා
10. Contact (*Phassa*) = එසේස
11. The Sixfold Base (*Salāyatana*) = සලායතන
12. Mentality-Materiality (*Nāma-rūpa*) = නාම - රූප
13. Consciousness (*Viññāṇa*) = විඤ්ඤාණ
14. Mental Formations (*Samkhāra*) = සංඛාර
15. Ignorance (*Avijjā*) = අවිජ්ජා
16. Cankers / Taints (*Āsava*) = ආසව

To realize and overcome those facts, the main path Buddhism explains is that the Noble Eightfold Path. It is;

|  |               |
|--|---------------|
| 1. Right Understanding ( <i>Sammādiṭṭhi</i> )  | සම්මා දිට්ඨි  |
| 2. Right Thoughts ( <i>Sammāsaṃkappa</i> )     | සම්මා සංකප්ප  |
| 3. Right Speech ( <i>Sammāvācā</i> )           | සම්මා වාචා    |
| 4. Right Action ( <i>Sammākammaṇṭha</i> )      | සම්මා කම්මන්ත |
| 5. Right Livelihood ( <i>Sammāājīva</i> )      | සම්මා ආජීව    |
| 6. Right Effort ( <i>Sammāvāyāma</i> )         | සම්මා වායාම   |
| 7. Right Mindfulness ( <i>Sammāsati</i> )      | සම්මා සති     |
| 8. Right Concentration ( <i>Sammāsamādhi</i> ) | සම්මා සමාධි   |

When we practice the path, there are above eight facts. When the path is completed, it includes other two facts as

|   |                |
|---|----------------|
| 10. Right Knowledge ( <i>Sammāñāṇa</i> )      | සම්මා ඤාණ      |
| 11. Right Liberation ( <i>Sammā vimutti</i> ) | සම්මා විමුක්ති |

**May the Triple Gem Bless you!**

**Dhamma Discussion for the Sri Lankan Bhikkhu Association in Europe**

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